

Andrew Jackson to John Caldwell Calhoun, May 13, 1830, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO VICE-PRESIDENT CALHOUN.¹

¹ This letter is not preserved in the Jackson MSS. The copy here presented is from *Niles' Register*, XL. 12, where all the papers of Calhoun's exposure are given (pp. 11–24). See also Calhoun's *Works*, VI. 349–445. The controversy was announced to the world in a pamphlet published by Calhoun Feb. 17, 1831. On the process by which the controversy was laid before the public, see Bassett's *Jackson*, II. 515–517.

Washington, May 13, 1830.

Sir: That frankness, which, I trust, has always characterized me through life, towards those with whom I have been in the habit of friendship, induces me to lay before you the enclosed copy of a letter from William H. Crawford, Esq., which was placed in my hands on yesterday. The submission, you will perceive, is authorized by the writer. The statements and facts it presents being so different from what I had heretofore understood to be correct requires that it should be brought to your consideration. They are different from your letter to governor Bibb, of Alabama, of the 13th May, 1818,² where you state “general Jackson is vested with full power to conduct the war in the manner he may judge best”, and different, too, from your letters to me at that time which breathe throughout a spirit of approbation and friendship, and particularly the one in which you say, “I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 20th ultimo, and to acquaint you with the entire approbation of the president of all the measures you have adopted to terminate the rupture with the Indians”.³ My object in making this communication is to announce to you the great surprise which is felt, and to learn of you whether it be possible that the

Library of Congress

information given is correct; whether it can be, under all the circumstances of which you and I are both informed, that any attempt seriously to affect me was moved and sustained by you in the cabinet council, when, as is known to you, I was but executing the *wishes* of the government, and clothed with the authority to “conduct the war in the manner I might judge best”.

2 *Niles' Register*, XV. 305.

3 *Am. St. Pap., Mil. Aff.*, I. 697.

You can, if you please, take a copy: the one enclosed you will please return to me.⁴

⁴ Crawford's hatred of Calhoun is well shown in his conduct in this matter. After his physical collapse in 1824 he returned to Georgia, where he slowly regained his health, although he was never robust again. In 1828 he became a circuit judge by the appointment of the governor, to fill a vacancy, and held the office by the election of the legislature until his sudden death, Sept. 15, 1834. Sept. 1, 1834, he wrote to Jackson, saying that he would accept the position, on the Federal Supreme Court bench, vacant through the death of Justice William Johnson, who died Aug. 11, 1834. This letter was endorsed by Jackson, “Wm. H. Crawford would accept the office of judge, vice Judge Johnston deceased. I regret his sudden death”. In this connection it is interesting to know that John Quincy Adams invited Crawford in 1825 to continue in the Cabinet as Secretary of the Treasury and that the offer was declined on the ground that Crawford did not approve of Adams's political principles.

I am, sir, very respectfully Your humble servant